

Platinum Keys (new version)

by Writing Pixie

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Summary: Lucy was tired of feeling weak. She goes to a symposium with Yukino where she learns of Platinum Keys. What exactly were they? Both mages aim to find out what they are and possibly obtain them. Rated T because there may be some language. This will have some NaLu but it really is mostly an adventure story. Some Chinese Mythology involved. Many characters involved! After GMG

1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1 "The Article"

Lucy was always a positive thinker. No one would ever question that. But when she compared herself to the other members of the guild she couldn't help but feel she fell a tad short in the magical department comparatively. She especially couldn't help but feel a tad pessimistic when she compared herself to the other members of _Team Natsu_. She had to visually compare her magic to theirs on nearly a day to day basis.

This onslaught of mild depression is probably the reason the article she read in _Sorcerer's Weekly_ called to her so much. It was about Celestial Magic specifically so of course she grew interested.

Celestial Spirit Symposium

Is Celestial Spirit Magic a dying holder magic? This question has popped up several times over the past few months. It wasn't that long ago that several churches were infiltrated and the protected Celestial Mages that resided there were found dead. It is rumored that the reason for the deaths was to break some kind of seal on a magical item. So now months after this seal was supposedly broken and tragedy struck those mages in question how many Celestial Spirit Mages are left in Fiore? (Please see the notation at the bottom that mentions articles about specific Celestial Spirit Mages.)

_ It's been rumored that the Magic Council has had several meetings to discuss the concerns about Celestial Spirit Magic possibly dying out. Unfortunately however there is no actual verifiable fact to back up these rumors._

_ This reporter won't stop at finding out the truth. A notification was found a few days ago in the mail about a Symposium that will be held for Celestial Key Merchants and Celestial Mages. _

_ The notification wasn't very detailed but what this reporter was able to glean from it will be shared now. The symposium will have a panel for research and discussion about the magic itself. They will be attempting to answer the questions about the magic that many people have been worrying over for months._

_ Researcher Syneviar Ixarium will be in attendance as a guest speaker._

There was a few more paragraphs of the article but truthfully to Lucy the rest was a blur. If Syneviar Ixarium would be attendance then Lucy was determined to show up herself. He was a famous historian who had written numerous magic history tomes. Lucy happened to know for a fact Levy had copies of nearly every one.

The unfortunate part about the trip was that she had to shell out ten thousand jewel just for the ticket to be able to attend. That price regrettably didn't include the price of her train ticket to get to Clover Town, which was where the symposium was to be held. Nor, did the price include the jewel she would have to shell out for room and board. This research trip was definitely going to do a number to her money pouch. She would have to take several jobs afterwards to make up for what she spent. Perhaps, she should do some solo jobs so she wouldn't have to worry about the destruction that her best friend, Natsu, constantly left behind.

Natsu had voiced that he didn't like that she was going to take a trip so far on her own. She was quick to reassure him. Because, luckily she wouldn't be attending the symposium alone as Yukino also felt a desire to attend.

The two mages had noticed the article at roughly the same time. In fact, the minute they each had finished the article they both tried to reach each other through their telecommunication lacrimas. Both grew flustered when they couldn't get through due to the line being busy. Luckily, Yukino was a touch more patient then Lucy, who had thrown her lacrima on her bed in frustration. When it went off only a couple minutes later she quickly grabbed it. The girls had gabbed in excitement over the trip. They both agreed it would be sensible to attend the symposium. Their conversation lasted well into the night punctuated with shrills of excitement. But mostly the two were discussing their planned schedules.

So now she was waiting for Yukino's arrival to Fairy Tail. Lucy invited Yukino to stay the night at her apartment and then they would catch the train early in the morning together.

"Hey Luce, did you want to grab a job?" Her best friend made her jump when he came up behind her. His fangs were wrapped around a fire turkey thigh so it was a wonder she was able to understand him at all. His garbled phrasing had come out more like, "a woos, id oo wa

oo gwab uh owb."

Lucy half scowled at Natsu. She was dually irritated with him, first for his manners and secondly she had told him already about her plans couldn't he have the decency to remember. But this was Natsu and she quickly forgave his short comings simply because his mind definitely worked differently then most. "Natsu, could you please remember to chew your food before talking?"

He swallowed a bite, wiped his chin with his bare hand, then grinned widely at Lucy. "Sorry, 'bout that. So, do want to grab a job? The rest of the team is busy but I figured maybe we could go on one just the two of us."

Lucy grew curious on where Happy would be but shrugged it off. She wouldn't be able to go on the job anyways so the location of the exceed hardly mattered. "Natsu, tomorrow is the symposium I told you about. I can't just take off on a job right now. I just don't have that kind of time."

"Oh, shoot, I forgot. Wait, how long are you gonna be gone again?"

"It lasts through the weekend. I'll be back on Monday." She paused for a second before continuing. "Oh, and you better not make a mess of my apartment while I'm gone. I give up on telling you not to invade my personal space but I do ask that you clean any messes you make!"

Natsu felt a curious thump in his chest at her thoughtfulness. But when he went to touch his chest and listen more closely things seemed perfectly normal. So he just shrugged it off and smirked at Lucy. He didn't bother voicing how he wouldn't make any promises if her apartment was completely thrashed when she wasn't in attendance.

Lucy arched an eyebrow at his smirk, and was about to ask what he was plotting when the guild doors were thrust open. She hopped off her bar stool as a bout excitement coursed through her veins. She smiled at Yukino, and the two celestial mages hugged each other in greeting.

Once the two were done embracing Natsu slung his arm across Lucy's shoulders. "Your train leaves tomorrow, right Luce? So what are your plans for tonight?"

Lucy physically pulled out of his half embrace. She escorted Yukino back to the bar where she had left her purse. "Boy you sure seem to be a nosy one today. Not that it is any of your business, Natsu. But Yukino is going to be sleeping over at my place so we can catch the train in the morning. We don't really plan on doing much of anything other then relaxing and getting a good night's sleep."

"Aw, that's no fun. You should totally have a sleepover! You should invite a bunch of us girls!" Mirajane interrupted. It was obvious to Lucy that the barmaid had been eavesdropping on the conversation. She didn't really mind it though seeing as she wasn't discussing some epic secret.

"Mira, while I am not against the idea of a sleepover in general.

Tonight just isn't the night for it. Our train leaves at six in the morning."

"Wow! Forget I asked. I didn't even realize trains disembarked from the station that early in the morning."

"I'm surprised the two of you didn't get a train ride for tonight instead of tomorrow."

"Natsu, I don't have the jewel for that. The ticket for the symposium was not cheap."

Natsu nearly interjected that if she didn't spend so much jewel on her collection of fancy frilly panties that she wouldn't have any issue affording her rent. But he stopped himself before uttering the words. He really wasn't in the mood to be Lucy kicked right now. He actually surprised himself that he was able to think before reacting.

"Honestly, I'm not surprised the tickets cost so much. I think the person putting this together worried that not many from Fiore would attend." Yukino stated pragmatically.

"Do you think it's possible that mages from the other countries of Earthland could attend?" Lucy asked curiously.

"Honestly, I kind of hope so. I mean right now I only definitely know of three Celestial Spirit Mages currently living." Yukino replied.

"Oh, who are they?" So...apparently his stopping to think before reacting was only a passing phase.

"Um, Yukino, Princess Hisui, and I would be the three Celestial Spirit Mages. I would also list Angel among us but she isn't exactly a Celestial Spirit Mage anymore." Once she thought of Angel though she momentarily had grown worried of possibly seeing the former member of the Oracion Seis, but the likelihood that she might show up seemed slim to none.

"Oh, oh yeah."

Yukino arched an eyebrow at Natsu's mental lapse. "Honestly, I have been curious to know of the possibility of other keys in existence. Wouldn't it be interesting to learn that there were keys out there that the people of Fiore weren't aware of just because they lay past our countries' borders?"

"I have to say that thought never even occurred to me. Perhaps that will be one of the things a panel member brings up at the symposium."

"Wouldn't that grandpa spirit of yours already know if there were more keys out there?"

"I never considered that honestly. Let's find out." Lucy took a moment to register mentally that Natsu had came up with a rather clever idea. Then she grabbed her keys from her pouch and went through the motions of summoning Crux. "Open gate of the southern cross!"

The elder spirit appeared before them seated in the air with his knees bent, and his ankles crossed one over the other. "Before you ask, Miss Lucy, the spirit world has been alerted about the symposium. I, personally, have stayed in tune to this whole conversation from my side of the gate. I do not have any such info in my database about keys that exist outside of the silver and gold keys that we are already aware of. But I will keep you apprised of any new info I may discover."

"Wow, that's the most I have ever hear the old geezer talk!"

Definitely a true statement of fact but just before Natsu finished his statement the spirit had promptly fell asleep. Lucy shrugged her shoulders indifferently and closed the gate.

Lucy was nearly bowled over by a pint sized blur of blue. "Oh my gosh, Lu, is it true?"

Lucy looked downward to confirm that it was indeed her female best friend, Levy, that nearly knocked her over. "Is what true, Levy?"

"You are going to be meeting Syneviar Ixarium this weekend?" Levy's hazel eyes seemed to dance with fandom.

"Oh, yeah. I don't know why I didn't think to invite you to this symposium. I guess I got blindsided by the fact that it was specifically about Celestial Magic."

"Oh, no Lu don't worry about that. I have a big job I'm going on this weekend anyways. But I was curious if you could do be a favor?"

"Sure, what is it?"

Levy held out a book that looked like it was heavier then her. "Could you get him to sign this rare first edition copy of _Magical Earthland Beastiary_?"

"Um, sure I'll try." When Levy handed Lucy the book Lucy nearly fell over from the dispersal of weight that was transferred to her hands. "Geez, Levy, how do you even lift this book?"

The petite girl shrugged her shoulders. "Some people lift weights to work out. I lift magical history books and tomes."

The rest of the afternoon passed along without much incident. Gray wasn't around so Natsu wasn't fighting him. He did try to pick fights with some of the others but they weren't quite as easily riled up as Gray would have been.

Once suppertime hit the two Celestial Spirit Mages ordered something from Mirajane and sat at a nearby table. The two talked mildly over what they expected the weekend might bring. They discussed what silver keys they hoped to see there and possibly obtain. They speculated over who else might be on the panel for information. But both soon realized that they weren't learning anything new from one another. If anything they were making themselves more anxious for it

to be tomorrow already. So the two girls decided it was time to call it a night and headed back to Lucy's apartment on Strawberry Street to attempt to calm down, watch a movie or two, and then turn in for the night so they could wake up bright eyed and bushy-tailed the following day.

**So this is my new revision of my previous story Platinum Keys. If you read my author's note (or alert) then I hope you appreciate this new version. I personally like how more in depth it is, and after watching more of the anime and knowing more of the story from what little of the manga I have read I think that this slightly different story path this version will take us will be easier to work through.
**

**Please review and tell me what you think. It may be a bit on the next chapter because I plan on writing two and three together before posting. **

2. Chapter 2

I took a little bit of liberties with the Fairy Tail lore here. But I tried to make it still fit seamlessly regardless. I hope you all like it.

Chapter 2 " The Train Trip

Even through her bleary, sleep riddled eyesight Lucy noticed her mistake. The train in front of her was vastly different then the one she would normally take. The engine car was a beautiful polished sleek chrome color and looked decades younger then the one she was used to. She arched an eyebrow at it then looked down at the words imprinted on her ticket. "Business Line?" She read questioningly.

"Did you not realized you purchased these tickets, Lucy?" Yukino asked behind her.

"No, I...what does it mean exactly?"

"This particular train always runs earlier then the normal train. It's intended purpose is to arrive at it's destinations rapidly. I didn't bring it up because I thought you bought these tickets on purpose. I figured you wanted to get there before the symposium would start."

Lucy shook her head. "I looked at the schedule and the first event I was concerned about doesn't happen until tomorrow. I figured today would just be a day to shop around first. I mean I thought we would check out the shop stands and hopefully find some rare keys maybe." She looked at the train again. "So how does it work?"

"Oh well, it's a magical vehicle unlike the coal engines of the normal trains. It has two standard SE-plugs installed in the engine car. The conductors of this train are all mages." Lucy briefly remember the time Erza had drove them around in the magical vehicle she had borrowed. It was quite fast for a mode of transportation so she had a slight inkling of what to expect from this train. There was no way she would be able to ride this particular train with Natsu though. She didn't want to imagine how sick this train would make

him. It was just too early to envision his green butt face right now. Then something slowly trickled into Lucy's mind about the power of the train. "But, wait that would drain a lot of energy wouldn't it? I mean with even two conductors that still would be difficult to maintain I would think." They both began to board the train and find a place to sit.

"It does yes, but they switch conductors at every stop. That's most of the reason for the elevated price." Once they sat down both eyed the seat belts in confusion before getting comfortable.

"Oh man, I could have saved jewel had I bought a normal ticket." Lucy whimpered.

"Yes, but a normal trip to Clover Town would probably take close to seven hours. I'd imagine this trip would take probably half that, maybe even a little less."

"Wow, that's impressive." No sooner the words were out of Lucy's mouth then the train began to slowly lurch forward. Lucy frowned at the slowness in the beginning. But it rapidly changed pace in the blink of an eye and the girls had to cling tightly to the edges of their seats to not fall out of them. "I guess there was a reason for these seat belts after all." They both began to quickly regret not taking the seat belts into further consideration before the train began moving.

"I guess all we can do at the moment is hold on tight and fix our seat belt dilemma at the next stop." Yukino proposed. It soon became apparent just how difficult a chore that would be. With how they were sitting precariously in the wooden seats, and their fingers tightly gripping the sides began to quickly become quite uncomfortable and exhausting. If it weren't for the rapid moving vehicle surrounding them the two might have passed out from the weariness coming over their bodies. It was never easy to deal with two types of debilitating exhaustion at once, and the two were both dealing with the physical and lethargic types of exhaustion at the moment. The two would soon find out that they had to sit this way for a total of thirty minutes before they arrived at the station in Onibus.

Of course despite the fast moving scenery outside their shared window those thirty minutes went by at a snail's pace. But once the train began to noticeably slow down the two quickly regained their composure and fastened their seat belts. "If I ever take a business line like this again I will definitely remember to fasten my seat belt. Not that I think I will have the opportunity with Natsu's motion sickness."

"Oh, gosh, imagine dealing with two motion sick dragon slayers. I'm constantly going on jobs with Rogue and Sting, and most of the time I get outvoted and we travel by foot. But when we have to use some mode of transportation it is such a nightmare."

"Eww, yeah spare me the details on that one please. I have enough trouble dealing with one."

"Didn't I hear that Wendy can cure their motion sickness though?" Yukino asked curiously.

"Mm, yes but Natsu seems to have developed some kind of resistance to

it. If it works at all the time frame is really short. If Erza is with us she just usually will knock him out. Somehow his head always ends up in my lap no matter if Erza is with us or not."

Yukino blushed at the visual. "Er, but isn't that kind of uncomfortable for you?"

Lucy shrugged her shoulders as the train began to move again. "I never really liked it in the beginning, but honestly it's a lot easier then dealing with his head out the window and his butt in my face."

Yukino covered her mouth coyly as she began to giggle at the mental representation her mind concocted.

"So, I have been meaning to ask you how you were doing in Sabretooth since Sting became the new Guild Master."

"Oh gosh, it's a lot better atmosphere that's for certain. He has adapted to the idea of guilds being a family like Natsu was spouting off about the day he came to the guild to defend me. I..I honestly wish I had been there to see that particular moment."

"Yeah, Natsu may be an idiot most times but he has strong convictions and protects those he views as his friends fiercely."

"I think the protection thing is a dragon trait. Rogue and Sting are quite the same way. They take the front line in fights before I even know one has begun. Then once I summon one of my spirits one of the two is always by side to keep my body from coming to physical harm. The Grand Magic Games was one of the few times I have fought on my own honestly. Sting was quite adamant that I shouldn't participate at all. But I wanted to show to everyone in the guild how strong I could be."

"I know exactly what you mean. I always feel like my magic is sub par compared to the other members of my team."

"I mean first there's Erza. She is an S-Class Equip Wizard whose ability seems to have no bounds. Taking on all 100 of those monsters in that challenge wasn't even necessary. But she did it because she wanted to show to all the viewers in the stands that Fairy Tail was still the number one guild. That particular challenge is probably what made the fans in the stands turn favor towards us."

"Then you have Gray. Gray has gained the ability to think on multiple levels when he fights and learn his opponent's disadvantages. Once he does he tries to turn the table on his opponent by striking out against those disadvantages. Take his fight with Rufus for example. Gray realized that Rufus could only use his Memory Make magic so fast. So Gray began casting his spells to the point it confused Rufus. That's how he took him out. I have been training to utilize a way to think like that. But Gray makes it look easy."

"Of course I can't forget Natsu. You would think that the way that Natsu rushes into things without thinking would be a detriment. I won't lie most of the time it is. But there are several moments where that quick reaction time has saved several of us. I will never completely forgive Flare for trying to hurt Asuka. I know she was just following Ivan's orders. But hurting a defenseless little girl

is the lowest of the low. Luckily Natsu's enhanced hearing caught how I whispered her name in shock and he was able to save her. I just wish that all had went down sooner rather than later so the fight would have ended differently."

Being able to share these self doubts and worries with another Celestial Mage was helping Lucy heal a part of her self esteem she wasn't completely aware was damaged. She still was determined to learn something relevant about her magic at this symposium that could strengthen her magic to make her invaluable member to her team.

About an hour after leaving the Onibus station and making another stop at the Kunugi station the train began to make its approach to the Oshibana station. Lucy began to be infiltrated with memories. She remembered Eisenwald's attack and the threat of the Erigor's utilization of Lullaby. That was definitely the first demanding magical battle she had been in. But it was mostly Natsu, Gray, and Erza that had done the work in that battle. She sighed as she once again in a way felt mentally defeated.

Lucy looked at the train station once more after it began moving again. _I guess there are some good memories here though too. I mean this is where Happy gave me Virgo's key._

The trip from Oshibana to Clover Town was probably the most difficult part of the journey. The train navigating the curves and sloping through the mountains at such a speed nearly had Lucy feeling sick to her stomach. It was also the lengthiest part of their journey as there was more actual land to cover. Unlike the other jogs on their journey from Oshibana to Clover Town took an hour to traverse.

Lucy and Yukino got off the train on unsteady feet. "Now I think I may know how the dragon slayers feel dealing with motion sickness all the time." Yukino muttered. Lucy silently agreed but she would never share this piece of information with Natsu. Mentally saying his name in her mind just then had her worrying over the state of her apartment and silently cursing his name. She would probably come home to her kitchen being burnt, her living room a pig sty of a mess, and more then likely a set of pink locks peeking out from under the comforter on her bed.

Yukino placed a hand on Lucy's shoulder as she noticed her whole body went stiff. "Hey, what's wrong?"

Lucy shrugged off her tension and smiled at Yukino. "Sorry I was mentally worrying over the shambles I am more then likely to find my apartment in when I get home."

"Mm. Yeah I can imagine. Fire is a pretty destructive magic all on it's own. From the stories you have told me of Natsu's childish behavior I have to imagine his magic in particular has to be at least twice as destructive."

"Try more like ten times as destructive." Lucy sighed. "I really shouldn't be worrying about him right now though. Let's go find our hotel."

It wasn't hard to find where they would be residing over the weekend. Clover Town was small because of it's location nestled in the

mountains. But the streets were a lot busier than normal due to the numerous merchants' stands set up. Some indeed were magic shop merchants which both the two Celestial Mages anticipated. But there were also weapons, armor, clothing, and jewelry merchants also. There were also a few food vendor stalls that all smelled heavenly in their own way. "Let's get settled in quickly. I'm starving, and I really don't want to pass up on any deals these stands might have." Lucy planned on trying to bargain for the lowest price possible. But there was a big part of her that didn't care how much jewel she had to spend on this trip. If she wanted something badly enough she wouldn't leave Clover Town without it.

**I'm so thrilled to hear that you are liking this remake. I personally like it so much better. I can't even begin to express how much. **

Even though I already sent you all PMs I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who took a moment out of your day (or night) to review the previous chapter. Thanks to: KawaiiPanda, RedJohnsw, Elizabeth Blackell, Misasha-x, ottery, magical fan18, and The Storytelling Wraith. I look forward to hearing more from you all in the near future.

**Please review I would like to know what you think. **

See you all again!

~Pixie

3. Chapter 3

First let me say that this chapter was a pain to write. I am still not completely happy with it. But eh. I don't normally write an author's note before the chapter begins anymore but I wanted to remind you that before you read this chapter that the time frame of this story happens sometime after the dragon arc that happens directly after GMG. I won't be including special powers the two might have now in the manga nor will I mention those at all because spoilers. I am just flying by the seat of my pants on creating new abilities for the girls. But I hope you like the ideas that I am sharing.

Chapter 3 "How to splurge your Jewel

Luckily the two celestial mages were able to put their stuff in their room even though it hadn't been properly cleaned yet. The two mages just turned on the charm and the hotel manager was putty in their hands.

Now they were out in the small and overly crowded street. There weren't many shoppers strolling up and down the street as of yet. But there were plenty of little merchants selling their wares in temporary stands that had been set up for the occasion.

The two were both a bit hungry but the sites before them ate away their hunger in a heartbeat. The first stand was a book merchant. Lucy couldn't figure out just how the vendor had managed to fit so many books in such a small space. There seemed to be nearly a thousand books here. Every one she picked up seemed to have some tie

in to celestial magic too. She was hesitant to purchase any after seeing the marked up value on the spine of the current book she was holding. Plus, none of these books were penned by Syneviar Ixarium. She probably would have snatched any of his books in a heartbeat regardless of price. Before she leaves she asks the gentleman if he planned to have his stand up all weekend. When he confirms he will she smiles at him and nonchalantly grabs a business card that has the name of the business he is based out of and address. She only glances at it though, not really reading the words in metallic print on the stiff rectangle.

The second shop they arrive at is a jewelry shop. Some of the wares seem to be emanating some magic charm. But most of them were simply beautiful pieces of female ornamentation. Again the prices were outrageous, and Yukino quickly decided that even though there were several pieces she admired she didn't need anything. But Lucy found a couple of pendants she couldn't help but purchase. They were nearly identical with the only exception being an additional charm. Both were ornamental keys. One had an additional heart charm hanging from the chain. The other had a star hanging from the chain.

They were a few feet from the stand before Lucy turned and looked at her companion. She smiled at Yukino and handed her the one with the star. "This one is for you."

"Oh my goodness! I didn't even see these! But, Lucy, you didn't have to buy me anything." Yukino had nearly been frightened by the markup value at that location. If she had seen these particular pendants she might have changed her mind and purchased one for herself.

"Honestly, these were pretty cheap comparatively. When I saw them I just had to buy them. Trust me I know I didn't have to buy them. But I wanted to. Sometimes, I wonder if you know how much I truly value our friendship. Just consider this a birthday present and Christmas present rolled into one. Oh my goodness, I don't know your birthday!"

"Don't worry you didn't miss it or anything. It's in the winter. My birth came with the first snowfall of the year x773. My birthday is November 30th. But since I am sharing, when is yours?"

"I was born on a day that the sakura were in bloom. April 13th, x767. It sounds so weird admitting how much older I technically am compared to you."

"Yes, well that whole thing with Tenrou Island was definitely an odd event."

Lucy nodded. She grimaced as she looked at more of the merchant stands. "From as far as the eye can see seem to be magic merchants. It's going to take forever to go through them all."

"How about we limit the number we visit before finding a stand or restaurant we can get something to eat at. I realize we have been able to stave off the hunger for now. But I'm starting to tip the scales and beginning to realize I will be near starving soon."

"Ha ha, you almost sounded like a dragon slayer just then."

"In measurement of hunger, perhaps."

"Oh true, I know Natsu is definitely not so eloquent. In fact he becomes quite whiney when he's hungry. Which is of course ever thirty minutes." Lucy wondered for a second how she was able to deal with an overgrown whiney child all the time. But then she felt a tad guilty for thinking that. He was her best friend and even thinking he was like that was unfair of her.

"Let's stick to three vendors for now then find some food."

"Sounds like a plan." It was odd. Usually Lucy was the more confident one. But somehow today Yukino was more relaxed within this setting.

The first stand they stopped at Lucy felt exceptionally lucky as her eyes landed directly on a silver key in the glass case the vendor had set up for the higher end items. The symbol was the one for Centaurus and she frowned as she thought it over. If he was a Centaur then he would probably be like Sagittarius and if that were the case it hardly seemed fair to be included in her own collection. "Yukino, look at this!"

"Oh yes! Oh, but Lucy you saw it first."

"No, no. It is Centaurus, probably another archer like my own Sagittarius. I say you should buy it."

It took a bit more coercing but eventually Yukino caved in and purchased the key. The look of excitement that lit up her face was definitely one to behold.

The next two vendors they stopped by didn't even have a glass case like the first. The items that were being sold were gimmicky novelties that they could honestly find anywhere. Once outside of earshot they both grimaced at the two stands they just wasted time at. "Why are those two merchants even here?" Yukino asked in annoyed astonishment.

"They think they can make a quick jewel or two. Honestly I think it's gonna bite them in the butt financially. I bet they had to rent out the space from those who orchestrated the event. I bet this is going to put them in the red for awhile."

"Ugh, economics..."

"Yeah, I hate it too. Let's figure out what we want food wise."

"Hm, we can either go find a restaurant, as we previously considered. Or I think I smell food stands that direction." She pointed the direction they had yet to travel. Lucy shook her head at that idea.

"Honestly, I don't want to go further that direction until we are ready to window shop some more. So let's go back the way we came. I think there was a cute cafe near that book vendor we stopped at."

The walk wasn't a long one since they were only a block and a half from where they had first started. But who they found heading toward

said book stand surprised them both.

"Princess Hisui, what are you doing here?" Yukino quickly asked. Lucy was curious also. Why would the princess be in such a small town for an event like this. Lucy quickly noted that Arcadios was only a few steps behind the princess.

"You two didn't know? I'm a celestial mage like yourself. I just don't tend to often practice my magic as much as look into the history of it, and what it can do." They both were shocked to discover this. But when she mentioned history and what it can do Lucy quickly realized that was how she knew about the gate. "I'm on the first panel that will be speaking tomorrow. I hope you two attend." How could they not? They both became more curious about the green haired princess in front of them. "Oh come with me for a second." The princess lead them over to the book stand.

"Princess, what can I do for you?" The clerk was actually exceptionally nervous. His hands shook but his voice did not reflect that.

"Firstly I want a good selection of books about celestial magic. I don't want any of the ones you know are just here to clutter your tables. Then, I want an additional copy of each. A third copy if you can manage it. Also I don't want to pay more then market value for them."

"For that many purchases I will happily give you a discount even, princess." Lucy wasn't sure if he was doing this because of the amount she was purchasing or that she was a princess. Then what the princess demanded registered in her head. She was buying books for the three of them.

There weren't actually many books at all that the merchant deemed really worthy. It looked like six titles total. Only two of those did he have three copies of. "I would have rather given you both your own copies but I knew going into this it was a long shot."

"This is very generous but you truly didn't have to."

"Yes, I did. I need to make sure the strongest celestial mages of Fiore are able to move forward in their magic. Oh and don't you dare say that you two aren't the strongest. You are the only two who have gold keys. That alone puts you several levels above the rest. But also you both have the kind of hearts that deserve to have the magic of the gold keys at your sides."

The three of them went to have lunch together at the cafe, well four really but Arcadios wouldn't sit he just hovered and watched over her shoulder. "I must stay vigilant at your side while you are in public, Princess."

The three laughed and smiled. They gossiped together about silly things. Then they went back out to the busy street and continued shopping together.

It was several hours later as the day turned to night before Yukino and Lucy fell on their beds. "I really feel bad that we didn't find a key also for you."

Lucy shrugged. "Honestly it was a long shot any way you look at it. But hopefully those books will turn out something good. I only wish I had brought my pair of gale-force reading glasses with me."

"I wish I had a pair to begin with. It must be nice to read that fast and learn so much so quickly. Perhaps we should each look at one of the books and see if we learn anything interesting."

"Hm, I do like that idea. But first I say you make the contract with your Centaurus"

Yukino quickly agreed and called forth her spirit. Both were a bit surprised with what appeared before them. Instead of a male as they both initially believed they were greeted with a female. She did have a bow and arrows strapped to her back. She also wasn't in a horse costume like Sagittarius was she was truly half female half horse. "Oh I so hoped it would be one of you. My father tells me stories about you, Lucy."

"Father? Wait, is Sagittarius your father?"

"Yes, he is the father to all the Centaurus spirits."

Lucy's eyes bulged out of her head. "Just how many of you are there?" Her mind worried over the number of 'little dog' spirits she saw in the celestial realm.

She just giggled. "I see that look on your face. Trust me not as many as you might think. There are only 12 of us altogether. Well thirteen if you count my mom. She was the reason he began dressing like a horse to begin with."

Yukino smiled at her. "What would you like to be called?"

"I get to pick?"

Yukino nodded first then half frowned. "Do you already have a name? I mean there has to be a way you distinguish yourselves from one another in the celestial realm."

"Oh yes, all spirits are given names. As you know all silver keys spirits tend to be named something their key holder wishes to call them. We then also adapt that name that our key holder has given to us in the celestial realm. My given name is Eirarhona. But most just call me Rhona."

"Rhona, it is then."

"I get to keep my name?"

"Of course, like Lucy I much rather have a friendship relationship with my spirits than an ownership."

The two talked with each other over their schedule while Lucy picked up one of the first books. She was reading something about Moon and Sun spells as Yukino wrapped up her conversation and sent Rhona back. "Anything interesting?"

"Mm, quite. This is about two spiritual entities that harvest their magic by the sun or moon. Celestial mages have been known to be able

to channel their magic but only if one of the two spirits see something in the mage. One mage will not have the power of both entities ever. A mage in question that is wanting to discover if they can harness such a power only needs to meditate beneath the light of the moon or sun."

Yukino looked out at the bright orb in the sky. It was currently a full moon. "I say we try the moon meditation right now" She pulled Lucy from her bed and the two walked to a park they had strolled by on their way to their motel. They found a cleared out spot that seemed serene but was still fully situated underneath the light of the moon. They both began to meditate and focus on the magic that ran through their body. Yukino made a startled surprised noise about a half an hour later.

"What is it?"

Yukino smiled brightly. "She came to me. Her name is Luna and her body was silver and ethereal. I wish you could have seen her. But she stated she doesn't show herself on this realm of existence in physical form. Her spells are affected by the phase of the moon. She said it was too early to call on her now. That I would have to learn her spells and grow before being able to use her. But oh my gosh I'm so excited."

Lucy shared her friends excitement but couldn't help but feel a tad disappointed. Perhaps in the morning if the sun was shining she could try to meditate again, only this time hoping to contact the sun spirit."

**My daughter loved the idea of the moon and sun spells. I kind of gave her a spoiler that made her very happy with where I was going to be taking these powers. **

** Chapter four has been written since chapter two came out but that was because I originally intended for it to be chapter 3â€¦ Then I realized the sequencing felt off so I pushed it off for Chapter 4. But I hope everyone will be looking forward to a good amount of humor. Before going into the symposium itself I figured finding out how Natsu was coping without his best friend would be interesting. :)**

** I hope you enjoyed this chapter and I would love to hear what you liked about it if you did. :)**

** See you next chapter! **

** -Pixie**

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4 â€" Lonely

Natsu was bored. There was no use denying it. The tell tale signs of how he cupped his chin with the palm of his hand, how he rhythmically kept tap, tap, tapping his fingers on the smooth wooden top of the bar, how he kept looking at the guild door and sighing.

Mirajane noticed his expression and came over to attempt to cheer him

up. She hated to see any of her guild mates looking so down in the dumps. She smiled at him and poked his muscle bound bicep. "Are you hungry, Natsu?"

His face brightened for a moment. "Yeah, of course I am. Can I get some fire chicken."

"But, of course Natsu." She began twittering away at putting together his meal. "Can I ask what's on your mind?"

"Oh, nothing really. I'm mostly just bored. I mean everyone worth fighting right now is on a job."

For some reason this statement didn't sit completely true with Mira. Sure she did believe that he wanted to get in a fight to kill off some energy. But he seemed a lot more then bored. "Are you sure there isn't something else bothering you, Natsu?" She handed him his plate.

"Ike ut," He replied with his mouth full of food. Mira translated his garbled speech to be, "Like what?"

"I don't know you just seem more then bored. You seem distant. Is it maybe girl troubles?"

"uh in o wirl wubble?"

Sometimes translating Natsu's speech that was distorted with his mouth full of food was even too much for Mira to handle. "Why don't you finish that bite and ask me again."

Natsu wiped at his chin and belched loudly then thumped his chest with his fist. "I said, what kind of girl troubles?"

"Oh I don't know." Mira lifted her hand wide in confusion for a moment as she tried to grasp what she was referring to. "I guess maybe something as simple as having trouble admitting to a girl you like."

"I like lots of girls though, Mira. I like you." He showed Mira his sharp fangs in a wide smile.

"Oh dear. I'm not sure you understood my question. I meant a girl you like romantically. That you want to spend time with all the time. Is there a girl that makes you feel all weird and gooey inside? Someone who makes your heart seem to stutter or ache when she will give you a certain look, or praise you."

"Erza makes my insides quiver."

"Yes, but I am pretty sure that is out of fear, Natsu." Mira shook her head. Was this conversation just simply hopeless?

"Oh, oh yeah." Natsu realized that a lot of the things Mira described he felt around Lucy. But didn't that make as much sense as his fear of Erza. She was his best friend so he would automatically feel something more around her, right?

Mira sighed. "Sorry, perhaps this just isn't the time for this conversation. I just thought that you at the very least looked lonely

to me. I guess at the most I was worried you had your heart broken."

"Oh, I guess I am kind of lonely. I mean I'm the only member of Team Natsu here right now. Gray and Erza are off on a job that Gramps assigned them right now. Happy went off with Carla and Pantherlily to visit the Exceed village. Then Lucy is off on that Celestial Magic meeting thing." Natsu waved his hand around manically as he tried to explain the last. Lucy had tried to explain what the thing was but he was eating at the time and his attention had been absorbed more by his food.

Mirajane got a twinkle in her eye. Perhaps she was reading too much into it. She really wanted Lucy and Natsu to get together. There just seemed to be something different about how he said the last sentence compared to the rest. His emotions backing his words took on a different quality. It was like he almost seemed jealous of the symposium Lucy was attending. That he hated it for taking her away from him. A bit silly to be jealous over a meeting of like minded people. But with the right encouragement a spec of dust could probably make the dragon slayer annoyed.

Just then the large door opened to the guild hall and Erza and Gray walked in. "Welcome back, Popsicle breath!"

Gray hissed at Natsu. "Don't start. That job was so exhausting. I just want to lay my head on this table and pass out for awhile."

"Yes, Natsu behave yourself or I will have to use force."

Natsu's body began to quiver. "So sorry."

Mirajane promptly sliced a large helping of strawberry cake and took it out to the table for Erza. "Here you look like you could use a pick me up."

"Oh, that was very kind of you." Erza's eyes never left the cake after it was placed before her so when she complimented Mira it actually looked more like she was complimenting the cake.

The door creaked open again but no one turned to look at the latest arrival. The whole guild already knew by now that treading not far behind Gray was always Juvia. The water woman sleeked behind a pillar and gazed longingly at Gray.

Whenever I do find a girl I like I hope to never, ever follow her around like Juvia follows Gray. _That amount of obsession is just creepy. Plus how in the heck does someone get hearts in their eyes? Yeah, definitely creepy weird. Perhaps, Gray can help me understand just what Mira was trying to refer to._

"Droopy Eyes, let's go outside."

"I told you I am exhausted. I am totally not going to fight you right now."

"No, that's not what this is about."

Gray arched an eyebrow. If he was sounding that serious perhaps he

should just follow him out the door.

OoO

After Natsu verbalized the conversation that he had with Mira only a few moments ago Gray started laughing out loud. "I knew you were an idiot, but wow you really don't know what she meant by liking a girl."

"What? She didn't say a girl I had a crush on. How was I supposed to know what she meant?" Gray body began to shudder furiously with the way the laughter coursed through his frame. "Hey, droopy eyes, you better knock it off you are starting to make me angry."

Gray took in several deep breaths. "Okay, okay sorry. So you were trying to understand what she meant then?"

Natsu shrugged. "I guess I don't really know what I was asking. Maybe I just wanted a guy's perspective."

"Do you think any of the girls from the guild are pretty?"

"They must be, right? I mean _Sorcerer's Weekly _is always requesting them as centerfold models."

"Well, yes of course the girls are gorgeous. But I'm asking if you think any of the girls are pretty." Natsu mentally pictured all the girls from the guild. There were qualities about each of them that he would say were pretty yes. But when he got to thinking about Lucy his pulse quickened. That was definitely a different reaction then the others. He calmed his heart rate and mentally went through everyone again always leaving Lucy for last. His body responded the same way.

"Hmm, from that expression I'm going to guess that yes there is a girl in the guild you like." Natsu opened his mouth to argue. "No worries, I won't ask you who it is. That's your business, although I am pretty sure I know regardless."

Crap was getting way too serious for Natsu's liking. "Ice Princess, your face is really starting to piss me off."

"What theâ€|? I was doing you a fricken favor, Flame Brain."

"Alright, let's go. Fire Dragon's Iron Fist," Natsu called upon his fire to engulf his fist into a flames. He jumped into the air and pulled his right arm back to punch Gray's left cheek.

Gray ducked the attack easily, and Natsu swiftly jumped away to get out of melee range. Gray extended his arms forward, "Ice-Make Lance," he thrust the curved projectile at Natsu's current position.

Natsu however moved too fast to be impaled by the long blade of ice. "A bit too slow. Oh, and you seemed to have misplaced your clothes again, Pervy Popsicle."

"Ah! When did that happen?"

Neither were aware of the form hidden behind the bushes. Juvia

clutched Gray's discarded clothing tightly to her chest.

OoO

A few hours later with the lack of people in the guild hall it became quiet once again. Natsu in turn once again became emotionally despondent. He said goodbye to Mira as she started washing up for the night.

Natsu began to meander randomly through the town. The air became crisp and chilly but because of his body temperature he wasn't really aware of it. Nor was he even seemingly aware of time or space as his brain wandered into nothingness. He just let his feet guide him where they led.

It somehow didn't really surprise him that he ended up on Strawberry Street staring at her window. He smirked and shook his head. He quickly scaled the side of the building and thrust open her window. The apartment constantly smelled like her, a potent mixture of vanilla and strawberries. If he had realized it sooner he would have probably known that on some subconscious level her scent called to him. That he craved it. He barely registered the fact now. But it definitely was there buried in the back of his mind.

He smirked and went to raid her refrigerator. Per normal Lucy had once again fully stocked her fridge. He knew she wouldn't be surprised to find it empty when she got home. It was one of those things they just expected from one another. She fully stocks her fridge, he eats the food, she complains, and then as she mutters through her annoyance restocks it. Oh, and then she complains again about having to spend so much jewel to feed him, and Happy when they technically did not live there. _Oh, good times._

Once Natsu pulled out the ingredients for the meal he had in mind he turned to look at the stove. "Damn, I don't know how to work that thing." He always just used his fire to cook his meals. So instead of turning the dials to try to get the gas stove top lit he lit his fist aflame and placed his hand above the wrapped packages. He didn't realize he probably should have unwrapped them first and the paper that the items were wrapped in went up like a torch. The fiery ashes burnt the counter tops. Yup, Lucy was going to be pissed.

Natsu sighed as he realized he wished he could hear the annoyance in her voice just then. He didn't want to have to wait to be scolded. He didn't want to have to wait to get a Lucy Kick to the gut. Well he hoped it would be the gut and not more delicate body parts. Yeah there had to have been some truth to what he was realizing. There had to be some truth to what Mira claimed. Lucy had only been gone for a few hours now. But even in that small span of time Natsu realized that he didn't like to be the one left behind. He realized that he missed her. He was lonely without his best friend by his side. "Just let that stupid symposium be done already!" He shoved his hands against Lucy's kitchen table which promptly split into two. "Well crap!"

**I personally love this chapter. I had a lot of fun writing it and I hope you enjoyed the humor and silliness involved in this chapter. I am never comfortable writing action sequences but hopefully I did well with the short fight between Natsu and Gray. I'm personally pleased with how it turned out. **

****Let me know what you think I would love to hear from
you!****

****~Pixie****

End
file.